



Suicides and Suicide Attempts Injury Brief

Injury Prevention & Control Program

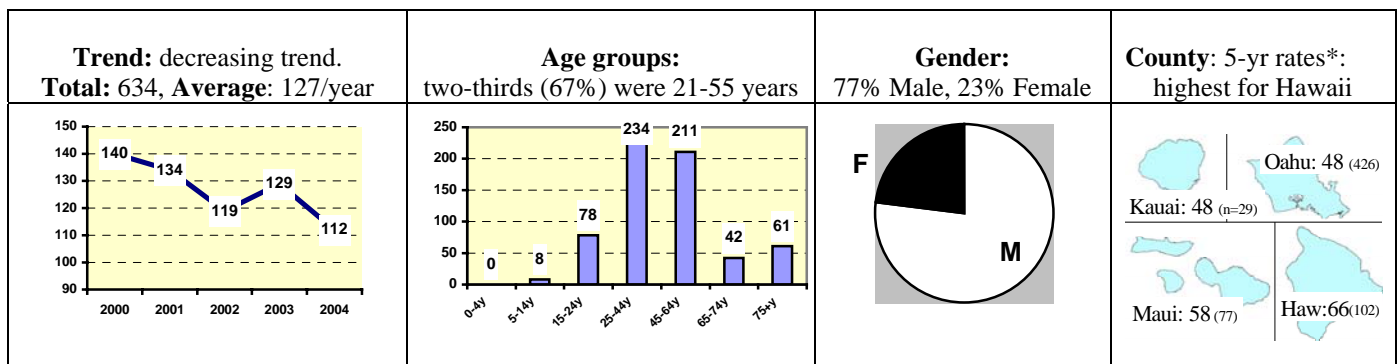
Overview of Suicides

Annual crude rate (1999-2002): 10.9 deaths per 100,000 residents (10.7 for rest of U.S.)

Hawaii state ranking (1999-2002): 35th highest (NV highest: 20.2/100,000, NY lowest: 6.3/100,000)

Injury ranking (2000-2004): leading cause of fatal injuries

Although suicide was the leading cause of fatal injuries in Hawaii, there was a significantly decreasing trend in the annual rate of suicide among state residents over the 2000-2004. Almost all (96%) of the suicide victims were 19 years or older, and two-thirds (67%) were between 21 and 55 years of age. The highest annual rates were among residents aged 75 years and older (14.6/100,000), and 25 to 54 year-olds (14.0/100,000). Male victims outnumbered females by approximately 3-to-1. Rates among Oahu residents (ages 20 and older) were 30% lower, compared to Neighbor Island residents, where Hawaii County residents had the highest rates. The most common mechanism was by hanging or suffocation (45%), followed by firearm use (23%), and poisonings (15%).



*Unadjusted rates per 100,000 residents over the 2000-2004 period. The number of deaths is shown in parentheses.

Contributing Factors

At least one negative life event was documented in the autopsy records of most (64%) of the victims who died on Oahu in the 1997-1999 period, most commonly serious illness (28%) or the end of a relationship (27%). About one-third (31%) of the victims tested positive for alcohol at autopsy, and heavy alcohol use was found to be more common among younger victims. Illicit drugs were detected among 26% of the victims, where methamphetamine (14%), marijuana (8%), and cocaine (6%) were the most common substances. About two-thirds (62%) of the victims had a documented history of mental illness, and about one-fifth (22%) were known to have made previous suicide attempts.

Non-Fatal Suicide Attempts

For every suicide, approximately 7 Hawaii residents are hospitalized for suicide attempts, and 4 others are treated in emergency departments. (This is the only category in which hospitalizations outnumber ED visits.) The profile of these patients is very different from that of suicide victims: More than half (60%) are female, the age distribution is generally younger (47% are 14-30 years of age), and most (76%) are the result of poisonings, specifically drugs and medicinal substances (74%). Hospital charges totaled over \$11 million per year, an amount that would be approximately doubled if physician charges were included.

Youth Risk Factor Data

According to YRBSS, Hawaii high school students had slightly higher self-reported prevalence of considering (24%), planning (19%), and attempting a suicide (12%), and receiving medical attention for an attempt (4%), compared to U.S. students as a whole (21%, 16%, 8% and 3%, respectively). However, each of these risk factors generally decreased over time in Hawaii. Among Hawaii students the prevalence of each of these risk factors was about twice as high for female students, compared to male students. Risk factor prevalence generally decreased across the 9th to 12th grades.